Practice of Carrying night Soil on head

830. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of States where the practice of carrying night soil on head has completely been done away with;

(b) the progress in this regard in other States, State-wise; and

(c) by when this bad practice is likely to end in the entire country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINSITRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) As per the information available the names of the States where scavenging is totally absent are (i) Andaman & Nicobar Islands, (ii) Mizoram, (iii) Sikkim, (iv) Chandigarh (v) Dadra & Nagar Haveli (vi) Daman & Diu (vii) Lakshadweep and (viii) Goa.

(b) A statement is given in the Annexure *[See* Appendix 185, Annexure no. 25]

(c) It is aimed to eradicate it by the end Of the Ninth Plan.

Book Bank scheme for SC/ST Students

881. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMFOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the central share for the year 1997-98 under Book Bank Scheme for SC/ST students studying in Medical/' Engineering classes in Punjab has not been deposited in the State treasury so far; and

(b) in ease the amount has been released, whether Government propose to revalidate it, enabling the Punjab Government to spend the amount during current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Central Assistance amounting to Rs. 10,99,500'- has been released to Punjab Government through Reserve Bank of India under this Scheme vide their clearance Memo dated 20.4.1998.

(b) Instructions for re-validation have already been issued to the State Government enabling them to use/spend the unspent balance lying with them at the end of the financial year during the next financial year without approaching this Ministry for revalidation.

Leasing out of WAKF properties by PWB

882. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Punjab Wakf Board has leased out thousand of valuable Wakf properties on year to year lease;

(b) whether Government are aware that on such properties given on one year lease, permanent structures have been constructed by the leases;

(c) if so, whether the action of the Board is Segal and is in the interest of the Wakf; and

(d) whether Govenment will institute inquiry to find out if the leases given by the Board is legal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) yes Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. It is a fact that in a number of cases the lessees have constructed permanent structures. In most of the cases it has been done with the permission of the Board white in ether cases this has been done by lessees unauthorizedly.

(c) The practice of leasing out of Wakf properties for 11 months and more has. been in vogue in Punjab Wakf Board for *a* very long time and in a number of eases the Board also issued no objection Certificates for construction thereon. It is felt that this practice of giving no